I found the assault on and the defilement of the U.S. Capitol mere weeks ago was an attack on the bedrock of our democratic institutions right here in the citadel of our democracy.

The toll that this insurrection has taken and will take on our great Nation will be felt for so long. In addition to the physical damage done, there is a human toll that this attack has taken on the lives lost and the injuries suffered by so many brave officers of the Capitol Police.

I was both in this Chamber and in the House Chamber during the time this attack unfolded. The next morning, I recorded some of the lingering physical damage to this building in several photographs that I made.

But the attack also is about things you can't photograph, the unseen scars in the Capitol community—the staff members and the Capitol employees who work every day to help make our Capitol Building function as it needs to function. Most Members of Congress were also roiled by this attack. It has shaken all of us.

Chad Pergram of FOX News has written an essay that captures this heavy toll on the people who work in the Capitol. I was so moved when I read his essay.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the essay by Chad Pergram written on January 31, 2021.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From Fox News, Jan. 31, 2021]

THE SPEAKER'S LOBBY: SCARS

(BY CHAD PERGRAM)

I know of U.S. Capitol Police officers who are hurting. Smarting. Reeling.

This, nearly a month after the insurrection at the Capitol they are paid to protect.

I know of Congressional aides who are hurting. Smarting. Reeling.

This, after a violent mob shattered windows and jimmied doors, storming through the Capitol in which they work.

And these are the aides who weren't at the Capitol on January 6.

These were staffers working from home during the pandemic. They're still upset after seeing an insurrection of the highest order in their workplace.

And then there are the aides who were working at the Capitol on 1/6.

I know these aides are hurting. Smarting. Reeling.

They huddled for hours under desks. In a coat closets. In restrooms. Barricaded, in rooms, just as they were taught in a post-Columbine world.

This, as the violent horde marauded through Congressional offices and deployed Trump flagpoles like battering rams to break into the Speaker's Lobby off the House chamber.

These are the scars which will take time to heal.

But they are scars.

And scars never disappear.

The United States Capitol bears ugly scars of that mortifying day. The lesions which remain are the hideous fencing encapsulating the Capitol, draped with spirals of concertina wire. There are the National Guard troops in fatigues, toting M5 carbines, guarding the American Capitol.

But the scars will remain in heads and hearts long after the troops depart.

An unsettling silence cloaks you once you enter the Capitol's secure perimeter these days. You pass through the fencing, showing your pass a few times as you walk. You pass stretches of grass which is the Russell Senate Park.

It is a park in name only.

The grass is there. Some frost in winter. Benches. The Robert A. Taft Memorial and Carillon, honoring the late Senate Majority Leader.

But you can't really get there. You cross Constitution Avenue. A car, like yours, already cleared for the ''Green Zone,'' may trundle by.

There is no bustle.

Capitol Hill was always a hive of activity.

AidesTouristsLobbyistsSightseersSenatorsJournalistsGawkersJoggersToddlersPoliceOfficers.

Before the pandemic, a jumble of humanity. Just coming and going. Doing the nation's business. Senators rushing to the Senate chamber to confirm the Assistant Interior Secretary. Or maybe a family just in from Spokane who've never set foot in DC, pushing a three-year-olds' stroller, ambling around the grounds. Lobbyists piling out of cabs on Independence Avenue in front of the Longworth House Office Building.

Now, a stillness.

The pandemic hushed the daily bedlam of Capitol Hill.

Lawmakers may only show up to vote. And on the House side, some don't even do that, voting from home. There are aides who haven't darkened the door in close to a year. There might be a smattering of tourists. Some joggers. Dog walkers.

A funereal silence.

That silence is incongruous with the quotidian scramble of Capitol Hill. The Capitol and its environs are a shell of what they once were.

The white marble is still there. The majesty of the Dome remains. But that silence is haunting. The silence is a signal.

It tells you something bad happened here.

I've been back at the Capitol most days since the riot. I stayed at a hotel close to the Capitol around the inauguration—so I could easily get in and out for work. My wife drove me in the other days and dropped me off. If the Capitol were locked down like this in any other circumstance, I would likely hire an Uber, Lyft or take Metro. But the pandemic presents a new level of difficulty just getting to work and parking my car.

But I drove myself to the Capitol one day last week. Officers inspected my badge and checked my trunk on multiple occasions—twice after I got inside the Green Zone. There was a lot of confusion about which way to go and where you were supposed to drive. But after a while, I finally parked where I usually do. There were no other cars there.

And then there was the silence. Just the rustle of shriveled leaves, clinging to the trees, bombed by tiny ice pellets from the sky.

No horns. No cars. No people.

The silence is one of those scars.

Some who work on Capitol Hill may never return, traumatized by 1/6.

That's a scar, too.

And, there's likely an emerging scar.

The Capitol won't be the same.

Multiple investigations are now underway as to what went wrong at the Capitol on 1/6. But one of the most consequential lines came from Acting U.S. Capitol Police Chief Yogananda Pittman. Pittman briefed House Appropriators about the attack last week.

''In my experience, I do not believe there (were) any preparations that would have allowed for an open campus in which lawful protesters could exercise their First Amendment right to free speech, and, at the same time, prevent the attack on the (Capitol) grounds that day,'' said Pittman.

Yes. There will be discussions about personnel, better communications and barricades. Many reporters picked up on what Pittman said about no ''preparations'' failing to avert ''the attack.''

But there's another important line from Pittman. She use the phrase ''open campus.''

That is what the U.S. Capitol complex generally was. An open campus. And, it remains to be seen if it ever will be again.

Prior to 1/6, people could traipse about the campus at their leisure. Walk across the Capitol plaza. Pre-pandemic, people could clear security and spend all day wandering around the House and Senate office buildings, if they so chose. It didn't matter if they had an appointment to see someone or not.

The Capitol itself was closed unless you were there on official business. You could also come to the Capitol to watch the House and Senate in action from the galleries.

The difference between the Capitol, and say, the State Department, is that the public doesn't have the right to just show up at an executive branch building and waltz around. Even the perimeter. But access to the Capitol is quintessentially Congressional. It's a two-way exchange on Capitol Hill. The people demand to interact with the people who represent them in Washington. And, lawmakers insist that their constituents have access to them. It's one of the only ways American democracy functions.

Moreover, lawmakers want people to enjoy the grounds. The view from the Capitol Hill vista, looking westward toward the Washington Monument and Lincoln Memorial is one of the most dramatic in the world.

Openness made the Capitol unique. It also made it an incredibly soft target—nearly two decades after 9/11.

So how does Congress address this? Barricades? Appointments? No one on the grounds unless they've cleared security blocks away? Controlled access? The closures of Constitution and Independence Avenues?

They hardened the White House facility in the early 1980s after the West Berlin discotheque bombing. They shuttered Pennsylvania Avenue in front of the White House after the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing. That also forced Congressional officials to shut off many streets which run between the House and Senate office buildings.

So what scars will the Capitol now bear now?

The Capitol will be different. More restricted. Less access.

And the quiet serves as a reminder to the bedlam on January 6.

Mr. LEAHY. With that, Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Alejandro Nicholas Mayorkas, of the District of Columbia, to be Secretary of Homeland Security.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, President Biden built his campaign for the Presidency around a theme of unity, the promise that he would work to heal the deep divisions that exist in our country and restore respect and bipartisan communication. He has consistently pointed to his decades in the U.S. Senate as proof of his understanding and his ability to achieve results—and for good reason. Senator Biden had a record of working across the aisle and brokering bipartisan deals, but so far, at least, the actions of President Biden have run counter to his image as a pragmatic dealmaker.

Let's look at the first big test, which is coronavirus relief. This, of course, has been the main focus of the Senate for nearly a year now. We passed several bipartisan bills, ranging from far-reaching, multitrillion-dollar packages to smaller, more targeted bills, and every single one received overwhelming bipartisan support. Make no mistake, the path to getting those bills signed into law was not easy. The Republican-controlled Senate and the Democratic-controlled House had very different ideas about the size and shape of those bills, but we managed to overcome those differences and provide trillions of dollars in relief to support our response on both the healthcare and economic fronts.

President Biden has made COVID relief a top priority and laid out a framework for a $1.9 trillion coronavirus relief package, which includes everything from bipartisan priorities, like funding for vaccines, to partisan ones, like slush funds for blue States.

I don't support the President's proposal in its current form, but I do believe that it is a good place to start to kick off bipartisan negotiations. I also believe that before we rush out and throw trillions of dollars—I should say more dollars—at this problem, we need to see how what we have done is already working. In fact, it was only a month ago when we passed our last COVID–19 relief bill with big bipartisan votes, and that money is not even out the door yet.

As we look to the future, I had high hopes that we could continue this trend of working together. After all, that is the idea the President ran on—bipartisanship, deal making, and reaching across the aisle to build consensus.

President Biden knows the rough and tumble of the legislative process very well. He helped broker many compromises during his career and promised to use that experience to restore bipartisanship in Washington. But that is not what the early days of this administration have looked like, not even close.

Our Democratic colleagues kicked off the year with threats to eliminate the filibuster. We know the filibuster is the single biggest safeguard of the minority in the Senate, whether it be Republican or Democrat, because it requires—indeed, it forces—bipartisan compromise in order to advance legislation.

For the past 6 years, as the minority party, our Democratic colleagues have proudly filibustered bill after bill. They have blocked the Senate from considering legislation on everything from coronavirus to justice reform, to border security.

Make no mistake, Republicans were frustrated. It is frustrating to have the majority and not be able to get what you want. But the integrity of the filibuster and its ultimate purpose was never called into question, even though Leader MCCONNELL faced calls from many—including President Trump—to toss it out the window.

But in this new reality of a 50–50 Senate, the Democratic leader has so far not been interested in playing by the existing rules. He wants an easy, compromised-free path for the Democratic radical agenda, and he is prepared to go full-scorched earth to make it happen.

Senator SCHUMER has threatened to eliminate the legislative filibuster and subject the country to the chaos that a majority-ruled Senate would create. The difference here, of course, is that Leader MCCONNELL stood up to those in his own party who called for this. Senator SCHUMER so far has led us to believe that he will not do the same.

Fortunately, the Senators from West Virginia and Arizona, Senators MANCHIN and SINEMA, have vowed not to participate in this dangerous exercise. And it is clear—or it should be clear, but I will emphasize—that this is not for the benefit of the minority party. This is for the benefit of the Senate as an institution and the country as a whole.

With the elimination of the filibuster off the table, because at least two Democratic Senators will not vote to eliminate it, Senate Democrats have found a new opportunity to break the rules, ignore precedent, and pave a path for partisan legislation. If the reports can be believed, our Democratic colleagues are preparing to abuse the budget reconciliation process to ram President Biden's coronavirus relief proposal through the Senate. This is a process designed as a way to enact certain fiscal policies in a budget resolution—things like spending reductions, tax relief, or tax increases.

Unlike the traditional legislative process, which is used for the majority of the bills that move through the Senate, there is no 60-vote threshold when you use budget reconciliation. But that doesn't mean you can or you should fast-track partisan legislation. In fact, our predecessors have warned us against that.

One of the most influential Senators in protecting this budget reconciliation process was Robert C. Byrd, the longtime Senator from West Virginia. He was the architect of the now so-called Byrd rule, which is used to keep the reconciliation process from being used to circumvent the normal legislative process. In short, he wanted to prevent the process from being abused in the way Democrats appear to be preparing for now.

The referee in all of this is the Senate Parliamentarian, a nonpartisan expert adviser on Senate rules and procedure. Folks on both sides of the aisle know and respect our Parliamentarian and the people who work with her. We respect their guidance to understand the rules of the Senate and ensure that both sides are treated fairly.

The most senior Member of this Chamber, the President pro tempore, once said:

> I've been here with many, many parliamentarians. All were good. But she's the best.

Throughout modern history, Senate Parliamentarians have advised the Senate on which provisions can and cannot be included in a budget reconciliation bill based on the application of the Byrd rule. In fact, the Parliamentarian gives it a process known as ''a Byrd bath.''

While the majority party technically has the power to determine whether or not to accept the Parliamentarian's advice, there has never been much of a question about whether to do so or not.

Think about this. It would be like allowing a batter in the World Series to ignore the umpire's balls-and-strikes call and treat every pitch as if it were a ball. I am sure it is no surprise, then, that the last time either party ignored the Parliamentarian's ruling was 1975—nearly 50 years ago. Since then, both Republicans and Democrats have understood the dangers of such reckless action and have respected the advice of the Parliamentarian, even when it punches a hole in their own legislation.

But if reports are to be believed, it looks like our Democratic colleagues may be preparing to break precedent once again. With the filibuster—legislative filibuster—still intact, our Democratic colleagues are no doubt considering a plan to shove President Biden's massive coronavirus relief bill through the Senate using reconciliation, and that plan involves ignoring